

# Kilgarth School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105130
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	324164
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Henry Moreton

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs S Simmons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss J Dawson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Cavendish Street Birkenhead Merseyside CH41 8BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 652 8071
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 653 3427

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Kilgarth is a school for boys who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most boys on roll are of White British origin. About one half of the boys admitted at age 11 come from a primary special school. Others come from mainstream schools. All the boys have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides an outreach service to mainstream secondary schools.

The school has Wirral Healthy Schools Status, the ArtsMark Silver and SportsMark Awards, the UNICEF award for Rights Respecting Schools and Investors in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Kilgarth is a good school. School leaders have a strong commitment to young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The good leadership of the school has sustained the good quality of teaching and learning, and the excellent care, guidance and support reported at the last inspection. Since then the tracking of the progress boys make in their learning, their levels of attendance and their standards in writing have improved.

Teaching and learning is consistently of a good quality. It is particularly strong where the boys are active in their learning, such as in drama and physical education. The climate for learning is purposeful in all classes and around the school building. When boys misbehave they are dealt with firmly and fairly. Sometimes boys find it necessary to spend time 'cooling off'. They do so under close and sensitive supervision, without unnecessary disruption to the rest of the class. This means that boys of all abilities develop social awareness and a sense of responsibility. The school explores every opportunity to provide learning experiences which match their interests and aptitudes. As a result, by Years 10 and 11, most boys have settled down very well because of the tailoring of provision to meet their individual needs.

Boys achieve well both personally and academically. They make good progress from the outset so that by the time they are aged 16 most have achieved success in nationally accredited courses. A range of full General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) courses and a National Vocational Qualification course are offered for boys at Key Stage 4. Boys with additional learning difficulties also make good progress and gain passes in entry level certification.

Most boys make significant strides in their personal development, which is good. This is characterised by their much improved attendance and behaviour. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Boys know the difference between right and wrong and during their time in the school develop a growing awareness of their responsibilities as citizens. They take part in a range of social activities as a result of their growing self-control. The successes of boys are well promoted. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily by giving boys opportunities to work alongside those from different cultures and faiths, but the evidence of the impact of this provision is not evaluated. This is not stronger because the next step has yet to be taken in supporting more fully boys' understanding of local, national and international issues. The good curriculum provides access to a range of relevant activities to suit individual learning needs, especially in Years 10 and 11. A typical parental comment is that, 'The flexi programme is the best thing that could have happened.' Boys have good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy while in school. They are very well prepared for transition to adult life through the good academic programme and excellent vocational experiences offered. Staff are deployed flexibly to ensure that boys of all abilities are engaged in learning. Mostly this takes place on site but often, especially for boys in Years 10 and 11, this learning takes place elsewhere using the excellent links with local industry and work related providers.

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support. There are well-established links with mainstream schools and the school re-integrates boys where this is appropriate. The school has robust policies and procedures for safeguarding its students. Support for parents and carers is excellent and highly valued by them. Another typical comment is that, 'Everyone works hard to help our son and us.'

Leadership and management are good. The school has had unavoidable staff absence since the last inspection. Others have stepped up well and, under the able leadership of the headteacher, have focused on making sure that day-to-day routines are secure. This means that boys' learning and behaviour have improved, but rigorous monitoring and review and forward planning have not progressed enough for everyone to be clear where the school is headed over the next few years. School leaders have identified the area of business and enterprise as the most appropriate specialism and are working towards gaining approval. The school's preventative work in support of students in other schools is held in high regard.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve arrangements for monitoring, review and strategic planning.
- Evaluate its contribution to community cohesion so that boys' understanding of local, national and international issues is planned for and strengthened.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Boys' attainment on entry to the school is below national averages because of their special educational needs. They make good progress from the time they enter the school. School assessments and results in GCSE and other forms of external accreditation show that boys make steady gains in their achievements because of the highly personalised curriculum. This includes boys with additional learning difficulties.

In 2008 about 50% of leavers achieved pass grades in a range of GCSE subjects. They were particularly successful in mathematics; not quite as strong in other subjects. The more able boys gained the higher grades of which they were capable. Boys of all abilities achieved very well in the computing course, which is equivalent to GCSE standard. Ninety per cent of leavers in 2008 were either gainfully employed or in work-based learning or further education. The trend for the number of entries and the pass rate in accredited courses shows an improvement since the last inspection. Boys of all abilities achieve well in a range of vocational courses including vehicle maintenance, plumbing and building crafts. Evidence in lessons and the boys' records shows that current achievement is good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Boys develop excellent relationships with staff, which help to secure marked improvements in their behaviour, response and attitudes. Boys of all abilities respond well to the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. There is a significant growth in their self confidence and self-esteem as they move through the school. Some get off to a shaky start but soon find that staff treat them fairly within the parameters of the clear rules and the high expectations of behaviour. Most boys respond well to this. This includes vulnerable boys and is most marked in Years 10 and 11 as they learn to trust staff. Their attendance is satisfactory overall. For many it is good because they value the opportunities provided to them, especially the flexi programme in Years 10 and 11. The personal development of boys is promoted well through the residential experiences and other trips, and by opportunities to follow the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and the Sports Coaching or Sports Leader awards. Boys respond well to the rewards for good effort and behaviour. They also respect the sanctions. Their 'scores' are given daily and boys respond well to the consistency and fairness of their application. Boys develop a good understanding about how to eat healthily while at school because of the healthy food provided.

Their physical well-being is promoted well through the many sporting activities. As a typical parental comment said, 'Staff go the extra mile to cater for the boys.' Not all boys enjoy school but they do appreciate the many opportunities provided at Kilgarth. Boys' economic well-being is enhanced outstandingly well by the focus on learning in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), and by the many work related learning experiences in Years 10 and 11.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Overall teaching and learning are good because activities are well planned to match the individual needs of boys and to cater for the diverse range of abilities and behavioural difficulties. On rare occasions, the academic challenge in lessons could be stronger. Staff have a good understanding of the social and learning needs of boys. Behaviour is managed very well and good attitudes are encouraged consistently by teachers and other staff. Lessons develop boys' moral and social awareness and their key skills. Teachers and support staff work together well and are good role models. Lessons hold boys' attention for appropriate lengths of time. Good use of resources, including computers and the use of visits, motivates them. Excellent use is made of teachers' specialism in areas such as music, ICT and Spanish. Daily incidents and events are recorded well. Assessment is effective with boys' progress in their learning and behaviour well charted, an improvement since the last inspection.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

There is a well-balanced timetable, covering all nationally required subjects, including careers education and guidance, work experience and personal, social and health education. Outstanding provision is made for older boys through the school's flexi programme, which is tailored to meet each boy's needs. Boys are motivated by the varied courses suited to their interests, especially in Key Stage 4 where most courses are nationally accredited, including through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. The more able boys can follow a statistics GCSE as well as a range of other full course GCSEs. Excellent links with vocational providers, especially for Years 10 and 11 provide enrichment. This year the school changed the way it taught boys as they entered Year 7 to help them settle better. Many boys benefit from the school's provision of laptop computers for their use at home to develop computing skills and complete home learning tasks. Provision in sport is good and boys can follow a wide range of interests such as climbing, gymnastics and boxercise. Links with the community to enhance boys' understanding of the local, national and international issues are not fully in place.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The level of care provided to boys and their parents or carers is excellent. Boys feel safe and know that at any time they can always go to the member of staff who is on duty. There are clear procedures and systems for staffing checks, with a single central record in place. There are robust assessments of the possible risks for activities, journeys and visits. Accurate assessments and records are made of boys' performance and welfare needs. Individual learning and behaviour plans are reviewed regularly and annual reviews are carried out effectively. There

are extensive links and liaison with other agencies and professionals to support boys, including those who are vulnerable. When the behaviour of boys is challenging, school staff provide excellent pastoral support to them and to their parents or carers. Supported by good leadership, staff try hard to provide learning opportunities that will increase boys' chances of employment or further training and are successful in most cases.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Well led by the headteacher, and based upon generally effective self-evaluation, teachers respond creatively to the learning and behavioural needs of boys. Effective systems are in place for training and supporting staff, including those new to working with students with learning difficulties. However, staff absence has diminished the capacity of managers to systematically monitor and review the school's provision and to plan for the medium and longer terms. School managers have focused on immediate priorities, which is vital in this setting. Leaders have identified the specialism they intend to pursue because this will raise the academic profile of the school and improve boys' economic well-being. While the school makes a strong contribution to its local community through its outreach service and boys' involvement with the local gymnasium, the impact of links with the wider community is not evaluated. One result of this is that staff have not planned as clearly as they might have done for developing boys' understanding of local, national and international issues. Governors are well experienced and make a good contribution to the life and work of the school. They run a tight ship in budgetary terms and set aspirational targets for boys to achieve. Their expertise is used well.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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**Overall effectiveness**

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us welcome when I inspected your school with my colleague. I am writing to let you know what we found out. It is based on what you and your parents/carers told us, as well as what we saw for ourselves in the school. We would especially like to thank the school council for being so helpful on your behalf.

Yours is a good school. The teachers and staff care for you extremely well and they work closely with people from other agencies and institutions to find the best ways of helping you. You gain confidence and improve your self-esteem because most of you attend often and behave well. You have your 'off-days' but overall you make good progress because of your hard work and the skills of your teachers and the staff who support you and them. We think that the school's plans to develop a specialism in business and enterprise will help to provide you with more skills that you will find useful throughout your working lives.

We have asked the staff to make the school better by improving two things. Firstly, improve how it reviews and plans so that everybody knows where the school is headed over the next few years. Secondly, work out what else it needs to do to develop you as citizens. This will help you to become more involved in local, national and international issues.

I know you enjoy using computers. You can access a copy of my report on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you get time, try to look it up. I hope you will find it interesting. Think about what you might do to help the school tackle each of the things that I have set out. I am sure you will have many ideas, especially about the last one, so do let your teachers know.

I wish you all the best for the future.